



February 21, 2014

The Honorable Gail Haines  
Michigan House of Representatives  
PO Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

**RE: Senate Bill 446 – Swing Beds**

Dear Chairwoman Haines :

On behalf of our respective institutions across the state, we are writing in support of Senate Bill 446, a bill that provides an important clarification to assist critical access hospitals and the patients we serve in rural communities. As you may be aware, the Senate unanimously passed this legislation on February 12, and it has now been referred to the House Health Policy Committee

Under current state law, hospitals are permitted to admit a patient into a "swing bed" (use of an acute care bed for a non-acute patient) if the hospital owns or operates a long-term unit *and* a nursing home bed is NOT available, under certain circumstances. However, interpretation of the law is creating challenging, inconvenient and medically concerning scenarios as facilities appear to be forced to transfer patients to a nursing home bed even *after* they have already been admitted into a swing bed.

The current environment is very dissatisfying to Medicare beneficiaries, and leads to the following:

7. **Requires patients to be moved "mid-stay."** This creates confusion, especially when the reason is not medically necessary, and contributes greatly to a very dissatisfying experience for the patient and their family, as it is consistently against their wishes;
8. **Creates a revolving-door.** Moving one patient from a swing bed to a nursing home bed simply opens a swing bed for a new patient resulting in a never-ending revolving door as nursing home bed capacities open and close. This situation also prevents nursing homes from serving its Medicaid community members, because the bed that becomes open in the extended nursing care facility must be filled by the Medicare swing bed patient first; and,
9. **Increases patient safety concerns and health care costs.** When patients move from one setting to another, there is significant risk of errors related to testing, medications, activity restrictions, falls, etc. Forcing the patient to unnecessarily move to a nursing home bed requires a new medical record, including the termination of all active orders and the re-instatement, all of which is a needless duplication of efforts, which contribute to higher health care costs.

Therefore, Senate Bill 446 breaks this vicious cycle and clarifies that the use of a swing bed is permitted if a nursing home bed is not available at the time of discharge from the hospital. We appreciate your consideration of this legislation and ask for your support.

Sincerely,



Daniel G. Babcock, CEO  
Marlette Regional Hospital

Deanna Wilson  
Aspirus Ontonagon Hospital

Peter Marinoff, President  
Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital



Ed Gamache, CEO  
Harbor Beach Community Hospital

Rose Goick, Administrator  
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Sam Daugherty, President  
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Brian L. Brasser, President  
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